

By being peevish? I tell thee what *Antonio*, I loue thee, and it is my loue that speakes: There are a fort of men, whose visages Do creame and mantle like a standing pond, And do a wilfull silnesse entertaine, With purpose to be drest in an opinion Of wisdom, grauity, profound conceit, As who should say, I am sir an Oracle, And when I ope my lips, let no dogge barke. O my *Antonio*, I do know of these That therefore onely are reputed wise, For saying nothing; when I am verie sure If they should speake, would almost dam those eares Which hearing them would call their brothers fooles: Ile tell thee more of this another time. But fith not with this melancholly baite For this foole Gudgeon, this opinion: Come good *Lorenzo*, faryewell a while, Ile end my exhortation after dinner.

*Lor.* Well, we will leaue you then till dinner time. I must be one of these same dumbe wise men, For *Gratiano* neuer let's me speake.

*Gra.* Well, keepe me company but two yeares mo, Thou shalt not know the sound of thine owne tongue.

*Ant.* Far you well, Ile grow a talker for this geare.

*Gra.* Thankes ifaith, for silence is onely commendable In a neats tongue dri'd, and a maid not vendible. *Exit.*

*Ant.* It is that any thing now.

*Bas.* *Gratiano* speakes an infinite deale of nothing, more then any man in all Venice, his reasons are two graines of wheate hid in two bushels of chaffe: you shall seeke all day ere you finde them, & when you haue them they are not worth the search.

*Ant.* Well: tel me now, what Lady is the same To whom you swore a secret Pilgrimage That you to day promis'd to tel me of?

*Bas.* Tis not unknowne to you *Antonio* How much I haue disabled mine estate, By something shewing a more swelling port Then my faint meanes wold grant continuance: Nor do I now make mone to be abridg'd From such a noble rate, but my cheefe care Is to come fairely off from the great debts Wherein my time something too prodigall Hath left me gag'd: to you *Antonio* I owe the most in money, and in loue, And from your loue I haue a warrantie To vnburthen all my plots and purposes, How to get cleere of all the debts I owe.

*Ant.* I pray you good *Bassanio* let me know it, And if it stand as you your selfe still do, Within the eye of honour, be assur'd My purse, my person, my extreamest meanes Lye all vnlock'd to your occasions.

*Bas.* In my schoole dayes, when I had lost one shaft I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight The selfsame way, with more aduised watch To finde the other forth, and by aduenturing both, I oft found both. I yrge this child-hoode prooffe, Because what followes is pure innocence. I owe you much, and like a wilfull youth, That which I owe is lost: but if you please To shoote another arrow that selfe way Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt, As I will watch the ayne: Or to finde both, Or bring your latter bazzard backe againe,

And thankfully rest debter for the first.

*Ant.* You know me well, and herein spend but time To winde about my loue with circumstance, And out of doubt you doe more wrong In making question of my vttermoost Then if you had made waste of all I haue: Then doe but say to me what I should doe That in your knowledge may by me be done, And I am prest vnto it: therefore speake.

*Bas.* In *Belmont* is a Lady richly left, And she is faire, and fairer then that word, Of wondrous vertues, sometimes from her eyes I did receiue faire speechlesse messages: Her name is *Portia*, nothing vnderallwed To *Cato's* daughter, *Brutus Portia*, Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth, For the foure winde blow in from euery coast Renowned futors, and her funny locks Hang on her temples like a golden fleecce, Which makes her seat of *Belmont* *Cholchas* strand, And many *Iasons* come in quest of her. O my *Antonio*, had I but the meanes To hold a riual place with one of them, I haue a minde presages me such thrift, That I should questionlesse be fortunate.

*Ant.* Thou knowst that all my fortunes are at sea, Neither haue I money, nor commodity To raise a present summe, therefore goe forth Try what my credit can in Venice doe, That shall be rackt euen to the vttermoost, To furnish thee to *Belmont* to faire *Portia*. Goe presently enquire, and so will I Where money is, and I no question make To haue it of my trust, or for my sake.

*Exit.*

*Enter Portia with her waiting woman Nerissa.*

*Portia.* By my troth *Nerissa*, my little body is a weerie of this great world.

*Ner.* You would be sweet Madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet for ought I see, they are as sicke that suffer with too much, as they that starue with nothing; it is no small happinesse therefore to bee seated in the meane, superfluitie comes sooner by white haire, but competence liues longer.

*Portia.* Good sentences, and well pronounc'd.

*Ner.* They would be better if well followed.

*Portia.* If to doe were as easie as to know what were good to doe, Chappels had bene Churches, and poore mens cottages Princes Pallaces: it is a good Diuine that followes his owne instructions; I can easie teach twentie what were good to be done, then be one of the twentie to follow mine owne teaching: the braine may deuise lawes for the blood, but a hot temper leapes ore a colde decree, such a hare is madnesse the youth, to skip ore the meshes of good counsaile the cripple; but this reason is not in fashion to choose me a husband: O mee, the word choose, I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike, so is the wil of a liuing daughter curb'd by the will of a dead father: it is not hard *Nerissa*, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none.

*Ner.* Your father was euer vertuous, and holy men at their death haue good inspirations, therefore the lotterie that hee hath deuised in these three chests of gold, siluer, and leade, whereof who chooses his meaning,

chooses

chooses you, wil no doubt neuer be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly loue: but what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these Princely futors that are already come?

*Por.* I pray thee ouer-name them, and as thou namest them, I will describe them, and according to my description leuell at my affection.

*Ner.* First there is the Neopolitane Prince.

*Por.* I that's a colt indeede, for he doth nothing but talke of his horse, and hee makes it a great appropriation to his owne good parts that he can shoo him himselfe: I am much afraid my Ladie his mother plaid false with a Smyth.

*Ner.* Than is there the Countie Palentine.

*Por.* He doth nothing but frowne (as who should say, and you will not haue me, choose: he heares merrie tales and smiles not, I feare hee will proue the weeping Philosopher when he growes old, being so full of vnmannerly sadnesse in his youth. I had rather to be married to a deaths head with a bone in his mouth, then to either of these: God defend me from these two.

*Ner.* How say you by the French Lord, Mounfier Le Boune?

*Por.* God made him, and therefore let him passe for a man, in truth I know it is a sinne to be a mocker, but he, why he hath a horse better then the Neopolitans, a better bad habite of frowning then the Count Palentine, he is euery man in no man, if a Trassell sing, he fals straight a capping, he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twentie husbands: if hee would despise me, I would forgiue him, for if he loue me to madnesse, I should neuer requite him.

*Ner.* What say you then to *Fauconbridge*, the yong Baron of England?

*Por.* You know I say nothing to him, for hee vnderstands not me, nor I him: he hath neither *Latine*, *French*, nor *Italian*, and you will come into the Court & sweare that I haue a poore pennie-worth in the *English*: hee is a proper mans picture, but alas who can conuerse with a dumbe show? how odly he is suited, I thinke he bought his doublet in *Italie*, his round hose in *France*, his bonnet in *Germanie*, and his behauiour euery where.

*Ner.* What thinke you of the other Lord his neighbour?

*Por.* That he hath a neighbourly charitie in him, for he borrowed a boxe of the eare of the *Englishman*, and swore he would pay him againe when hee was able: I thinke the *Frenchman* became his suretie, and seald vnder for another.

*Ner.* How like you the yong *Germanie*, the Duke of Saxones Nephew?

*Por.* Very vildely in the morning when hee is sober, and most vildely in the afternoone when hee is drunke: when he is best, he is a little worse then a man, and when he is worst, he is little better then a beast: and the worst fall that euer fell, I hope I shall make shift to goe without him.

*Ner.* If he should offer to choose, and choose the right Casket, you should refuse to performe your Fathers will, if you should refuse to accept him.

*Por.* Therefore for feare of the worst, I pray thee set a deepe glasse of *Reinish*-wine on the contrary Casket, for if the diuell be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will doe any thing *Nerissa* ere I will be married to a sponge.

*Ner.* You neede not feare Lady the hauing any of

these Lords, they haue acquainted me with their determinations, which is indeede to returne to their home, and to trouble you with no more suite, vnlesse you may be won by some other fort then your Fathers imposition, depending on the Caskets.

*Por.* If I liue to be as olde as *Sibilla*, I will dye as chaste as *Diana*: vnlesse I be obtained by the manner of my Fathers will: I am glad this parcell of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I doate on his verie absence: and I wish them a faire departure.

*Ner.* Doe you not remember Ladie in your Fathers time, a *Venesian*, a Scholler and a Souldior that came hither in companie of the Marquesse of *Mountferrat*?

*Por.* Yes yes, it was *Bassanio*, as I thinke, so was hee call'd.

*Ner.* True Madam, hee of all the men that euer my foolish eyes look'd vpon, was the best deseruing a faire Lady.

*Por.* I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

*Enter a Servingman.*

*Ser.* The foure Strangers seeke you Madam to take their leaue: and there is a fore-runner come from a fift, the Prince of *Morocco*, who brings word the Prince his Maister will be here to night.

*Por.* If I could bid the fift welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other foure farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he haue the condition of a Saint, and the complexion of a diuell, I had rather hee should shrine me then wue me. Come *Nerissa*, sitra go before; whiles wee shut the gate vpon one wooer, another knocks at the doore.

*Exit.*

*Enter Bassanio with Shylocke the Jew.*

*Shy.* Three thousand ducates, well.

*Bas.* I sir, for three months.

*Shy.* For three months, well.

*Bas.* For the which, as I told you,

*Antonio* shall be bound.

*Shy.* *Antonio* shall become bound, well.

*Bas.* May yousted me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer.

*Shy.* Three thousand ducats for three months, and *Antonio* bound.

*Bas.* Your answer to that.

*Shy.* *Antonio* is a good man.

*Bas.* Haue you heard any imputation to the contrary.

*Shy.* Ho no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man, is to haue you vnderstand me that he is sufficient, yet his meanes are in supposition: he hath an *Argosie* bound to *Tripolis*, another to the *Indies*, I vnderstand moreouer vpon the *Ryalta*, he hath a third at *Mexico*, a fourth for *England*, and other ventures hee hath squandered abroad, but ships are but boords, Saylers but men, there be land rats, and water rats, water theues, and land theues, I meane *Pyrats*, and then there is the perill of waters, winde, and rocks: the man is notwithstanding sufficient, three thousand ducats, I thinke I may take his bond.

*Bas.* Be assured you may.

*Jew. I*